than one and a half years of signing the Convention on Bio-diversity at Rio?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) India, alongwith 156 other countries, signed the Convention on Biological Diversity during the UNCED Earth Summit held at, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June, 1992. After signature, a number of countries including India have ratified this Convention which has come into force about two months ago. Action is under consideration to prepare for legislation for the conservaiton of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of technologies taking into account the public interest.

Allotment of Waste Lands

218. SHRI M.A. BABY:
SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that village or town waste lands are allotted to persons who apply to bring out afforestation;

(b) what are the norms that are followed in these allotments by the authorities;

(c) whether Government provide any subsidy or assistance for the encouragement of the same;

(d) if so, what is the minimum amount and maximum amount; and

(e) the total number of acres brought under this scheme afforestation in the entire country as a whole?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Afforestation Scheme

219. SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN:
SHRI M.A. BABY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the norms recommended by Government in the afforestation scheme;

(b) what steps have been taken by Government to prohibit the public from throwing of dead bodies in the Ganges;

(c) whether Pollution Control officers have taken precautions to put the violators before a court of law; and

(d) if not, what action has been taken so far or would be taken in the near future to avert such pollution emmiting acts by individuals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Under the 20 Point Programme, afforestation and tree planting activities are undertaken annually keeping in view the availability of funds. In undertaking these activities, special attention is given to the regeneration of degraded forest areas and lands adjoining forest areas, national parks, sanctuaries and other protected areas as also the ecologically fragile areas like the Western Himalayas, Aravallis and Western Ghats. Considerations of adopting appropriate moisture and soil conservation measures, integrated watershed development, planting of indigenous species producing fuelwood, fodder and other non-timber forest produce for the local village communities, adoption of appropriate technologies for regeneration of degraded forest areas, creation of general awareness and promoting the involvement of the rural people etc. are kept in view while designing and